

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 and 3 to 15 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, now read as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A printing control apparatus which performs a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices, comprising:

printing attribute acquisition means for acquiring an attribute of a printing job to be processed;

adaptive environment determination means for obtaining device combinations capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing job; and

process flow presentation means for presenting a process flow required ~~procedures of the printing process by a combination actually used~~ to execute the printing job, wherein the process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in ~~out of~~ the device combinations obtained by said adaptive environment determination means.

2. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when a plurality of device combinations exist, said adaptive environment determination means determines an order of the device combinations under a condition designated in advance, and presents the device combinations in that order.

3. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein
the performance information includes pieces of information on a printing speed, a cost, and a device installation place, and

said adaptive environment determination means determines the order under a condition including any one of the printing speed, the cost, and the device installation place.

4. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the apparatus further comprises state acquisition means for acquiring a process state of a printing device in use for executing the printing job, and

said process flow presentation means presents a current process status together with the process flow ~~procedures~~ on the basis of the acquired process state.

5. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein, in ~~in~~ ~~[[of]]~~ the presented process flow ~~procedures~~, one of the working procedures or the process procedures ~~a procedure~~ which are ~~[[is]]~~ in progress or are ~~[[is]]~~ to be performed next is emphatically displayed to present the current process status.

6. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the process flow includes ~~procedures include~~ a message which prompts checking or replenishment of an expandable used by the printing device as a preparation process.

7. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the apparatus further comprises display means for displaying device combinations
capable of executing the printing job so as to be able to select one of the device combinations,
and

said process flow presentation means presents process flow ~~procedures~~ of the
printing process by a device combination selected via said display means.

8. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the
attribute of the printing job contains color printing, said adaptive environment determination
means detects monochrome and color pages contained in the printing job, and determines a
device combination so as to print the monochrome page by a monochrome printing device.

9. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the apparatus further comprises state acquisition means for acquiring a device
state of a device that included in the device combination actually used to process the printing job,
and

said process flow presentation means changes a display state of the process flow
~~procedure~~ on the basis of the device state acquired by said state acquisition means.

10. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said
process flow presentation means emphatically presents a procedure which is in progress or is to
be performed by a user out of the presented process flow ~~procedures~~.

11. (Currently amended) A printing control method for performing a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices, comprising:

a printing attribute acquisition step of acquiring an attribute of a printing job to be processed;

an adaptive environment determination step of obtaining device combinations capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing job; and

a process flow presentation step of presenting a process flow required procedures of the printing process by a combination actually used to execute the printing job, wherein the process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in ~~out of~~ the device combinations obtained in said adaptive environment determination step.

12. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein

the method further comprises a display step of displaying device combinations capable of executing the printing job on display means so as to be able to select one of the device combinations, and

in the process flow presentation step, process flow procedures of the printing job ~~process~~ by a device combination selected via the display means is ~~is~~ ~~are~~ presented.

13. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein
the method further comprises a state acquisition step of acquiring a device state of
a device that included in the device combination actually used to process the printing job, and
in the process flow presentation step, a display state of the process flow procedure
is changed on the basis of the device state acquired in the state acquisition step.

14. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium storing program code for
causing a computer to execute a method for controlling a printing process employing a plurality
of printing devices, comprising:

a printing attribute acquisition step of acquiring an attribute of a printing job to be
processed;

an adaptive environment determination step of obtaining device combinations
capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least
performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing
job; and

a process flow presentation step of presenting a process flow required procedures
~~of the printing process by a combination actually used to execute the printing job, wherein the~~
process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be
performed by respective printing devices included in the device ~~out of~~ the device combinations
obtained in said adaptive environment determination step.

15. (Currently amended) A computer program product comprising a computer-readable medium having computer code for controlling a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices, said product comprising:

a printing attribute acquisition process procedure code for acquiring an attribute of a printing job to be processed;

an adaptive environment determination process procedure code for obtaining device combinations capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing job; and

a process flow presentation process procedure code for presenting a process flow required ~~procedures of the printing process by a combination actually used~~ to execute the printing job, wherein the process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in ~~out of the device combinations~~ obtained by said adaptive environment determination code.